

Saturday, August 09, 2003

## **Governor discusses projects**

KDN Staff

Gov. Frank Murkowski on Friday voiced concerns about the cost of the proposed bridge to Gravina, reaffirmed his administration's commitment to seeing that the Ward Cove veneer mill is once again operating and appeared to endorse consolidation of Ketchikan's governments.

During his brief visit to Ketchikan, Murkowski said he still supports the construction of a bridge between Revillagigedo and Gravina islands, but added, "there's got to be some realism." Asking the state to pay a 20 percent match — or nearly \$49 million — of the \$244 million bridge project "is stretching our capability," Murkowski said.

The state Department of Transportation this week released a Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Gravina Access Project and in the process announced a \$244 million two-high bridge option linking Revilla, Pennock and Gravina islands as its preferred alternative.

When asked if he supported the preferred alternative, Murkowski voiced concerns about the project's pricetag. Congressman Don Young, who chairs the House Transportation Committee, said he too was concerned about the cost of the project during a recent visit to Ketchikan. Young said he has asked Murkowski to lower the cost of the project.

Murkowski said his administration is committed to aiding the Ketchikan Gateway Borough in its efforts to get its Ward Cove veneer mill operating.

For further information, see Deanna Garrison's article in the Aug. 9-10, 2003 edition of the Ketchikan Daily News.